The reaction of the Government on the above demands is as below:—

(i) The matter is sub-judice.

(ii) The Government has notified Regional Rural Banks (Appointment) and promotion of Officers and other employees) Rules, 1998 on 29th July, 1998 and has lifted the ban on promotion vide order dated 15th June, 1999. The ban on new recruitment has not been lifted due to the precarious financial condition of the Regional Rural Banks.

(iii) After considering a number of alternative models, it was decided to revamp Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) on a "Stand alone" basis by way of infusion of additional capital for cleansing of balance sheets of selected RRBs rather than by creating National Rural Bank of India.

(iv) As regards the retirement benefits, the gratuity scheme for RRB employees is already at par with their respective sponsor banks. The RRB employees are also covered under the Employees Provident Fund & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 for Provident Fund purposes. However, due to their precarious financial condition, RRBs are not in a position to provide parity in payment of pension to its employees at par with sponsor banks.

Exports through Sea Routes

*231. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO:
DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the exports made through sea routes during 1998-99;

(b) whether easy access provided by the sea could contribute better in the trade property through sea routes; and

(c) if so, the measures proposed to tap fully the maritime potential for Indian trade with 33 ports?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJNATH SINGH): (a) Goods weighing 62.54 million tonnes from India were exported through sea ports during the year 1998-99.

(b) and (c) Easy access to the sea provided by the sea ports has contributed

to the growth of country's overseas trade. About 95% of the country's import and exports is routed through the sea ports. Steps have been taken to create additional capacity of the order of 157 million tons in the 11 major ports during 9th Five Year Plan. In addition, the 12th major port at Ennore is under construction. Of the 148 intermediate /minor ports only about 30 contribute to cargo handling. Development of these ports is within the purview of State Governments concerned. With a view to attracting new technology, introducing better managerial practices and increasing productivity, various fiscal and other incentives have been announced to attract private investment in ports. The Major Port Trust Act, 1963 has been recently amended to give effect to a scheme of joint venture formations between a major port and foreign port, major port and minor port and a major port and companies. A programme for modernisation of equipments in the ports has also been taken up.

Rules for Appellate Tribunal for Fera

*232. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the rules for the functioning of Appellate Tribunal for FERA have not been framed as yet and if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(b) by when these are likely to be framed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) and (b) Foreign Exchange Management (Adjudication Proceedings and Appeal) Rules, 2000 have been notified by Department of Economic Affairs vide GSR 382(E) dated 3rd May, 2000. These rules which came into force on 1.6.2000, *inter-alia*, contain provisions regardings Appeal to the Appellate Tribunal as well as Procedure before Appellate Tribunal. Department of Legal Affairs has already issued Notification setting up the Appellate Tribunal for Foreign Exchange at New Delhi w.e.f 1.6.2000. The framing of recruitement Rules for the post of Chairperson and Members of the Appellate Tribunal is under process in consultation with Department of Personnel and Training. The Recruitment Rules will be notified as soon as these are finalised. As regards Notification to be issued under Section 20(2)(c) and 20(2)(d) of the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999, these would be issued in due course at the earliest.